

Woodcock.—These seem to come in later than formerly, possibly visiting the Anamalais before arriving here. February is the best month and nearly all are gone by March 15, or earlier if heavy rain falls. I think 25 to 30 may be considered a good average season's bag, it being remembered that small game shooting on the Plateau is limited to two days a week. Three woodcock weighed on January 5, i.e. well in the season, were 10, 11 and 11 oz. respectively.

LOVEDALE,
NILGIRIS,
June 1, 1927.

E. G. PHYTHIAN ADAMS,
Major, I.A., (Retd.)

XXV.—A CORRECTION TO MR. B. B. OSMASTON'S 'NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF KASHMIR'

In Vol. xxxi, part 4 of our Journal, Mr. B. B. Osmaston has commenced a series of very valuable and interesting notes on the birds of Kashmir. He will perhaps forgive me for venturing to correct two of his identifications, as mistakes quickly gain currency and are endlessly repeated.

No. 75, *Acrocephalus concinens concinens*.—The Chinese Paddy-field Warbler.

A Paddy-field Warbler has been known to breed in Cashmere ever since Brooks first found an empty nest at Shupyion on June 13, 1871, and shot the male bird which is still in the British Museum. Yet though we have for some years known it to be common and Ratray, Wilson, Davidson, Bates and others have collected numbers of the nests and eggs, we cannot get its name right. In the last edition of the Fauna we find it shown under two species *Acrocephalus agricolus* (which may nest in Turkestan or the plains of India but certainly does *not* nest in Cashmere), and *A. concinens concinens* (which in my opinion does not occur anywhere in Indian limits). It remained however for Mr. Osmaston to collect a proper series of skins though owing to his departure for Africa he was unable to examine them critically and merely accepted the identification given in the Fauna. I have seen his series and also various other birds collected in the Cashmere jheels in the breeding season, 17 in all. I have no hesitation in saying that these birds agree with Harington and Whitehead's series in the British Museum from the Kaghan Valley, the type locality for *Acrocephalus concinens haringtoni*, which is therefore the correct name for the Paddy-field Warbler which breeds so commonly in Cashmere.

No. 77. *Sylvia curruca affinis*. Indian Lesser White-throat.

Both Dr. C. B. Ticehurst and myself have endeavoured for some years past to dissipate the legend that this species breeds within Indian limits, but it is repeated again and again like the mistakes over the Paddy-field Warbler. Mr. Osmaston kindly gave me two White-throats collected by him in the Suru Valley to identify his eggs. These are both specimens of *Sylvia althæa*, Hume's White-throat which is really the breeding Whitethroat of Cashmere. It

will be noticed in Colonel Meinertzhagen's account of his trip to Ladakh (*Ibis*, 1927, p. 421) that he found *S. althaea* to be the common breeding bird of the Indus, Shyok and Nubra Valleys. Mr. Osmaston's mistake was of course due to his hurried departure for Africa before he could make a fresh examination of his skins, but I can only end by urging that for the present no egg collector in India, Cashmere or Baluchistan will name any Whitethroat's eggs without a skin from the nest to support his identification.

CALDBEC HOUSE,
BATTLE,
August 30, 1927.

HUGH WHISTLER.

XXVI.—AN ALBINO TURTLE

On June 25, I secured a specimen of the Common Mud Turtle of these parts, *Emyda granosa intermedius*, Annandale, which is apparently an albino. It was a half-grown specimen and was bright yellow throughout with the exception of the limbs and neck which were chrome yellow. The plastron had the usual colourless appearance. It was taken in the Ambajheri Tank at Nagpur and is deposited in the Nagpur Museum. (Reptile No. 274.)

NAGPUR, C. P.,
August 17, 1927.

E. A. D'ABREU, F.Z.S.

XXVII.—NOTES ON THE DESERT MONITOR (*VARANUS GRISEUS*) AND THE SPINY TAILED LIZARD (*UROMASTIX MICROLEPIS*)

The following field notes may be of interest: they have been compiled from observation and the experience of Bedouin hunters. Most of the facts were obtained from Nahaita, an Araif tribesman, who has spent most of his thirty years or so of life hunting the wild animals of the Shamiyah Desert, and Radam, who has had a similar career. For their truth I cannot vouch, but both men are now in the Camel Police and are models of reliability when reporting, and of observation and knowledge when anything relating to the local stretches of Iraq and Najd is under discussion.

The Desert Monitor (*V. griseus*) locally known as the *harwhal*, ranges in adults from twelve to twenty inches in length. It is so called because it is never seen travelling at any other pace but that of a fast wriggling run. I have myself, however, seen them travelling at what could only be termed a slow stumbling crawl but this was in about twelve square feet of confinement.

They are easily overtaken by a running man. When neared, they stop, turning their heads with mouths wide open in the direction of their pursuers. They then lash their tails furiously from side to side and shoot their tongues in and out at the same time hissing loudly. If foot or stick is approached more closely to them, they will make sudden darts snapping fiercely at the offending object, and although the only result is bleeding and broken teeth, they persist in doing the same thing repeatedly.